

R 141819Z JUL 86
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9393
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
NATO COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL BARCELONA
AMCONSUL SEVILLE
AMCONSUL BILBAO POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 08158

TERREP

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: [PTER](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SHI'IA TERRORISTS PARDONED BY SPANISH GOVERNMENT

REF: A) MADRID 659, B) MADRID 793

¶1. (U) THE GOS JULY 12 OFFICIALLY PARDONED TWO LEBANESE SHI'IA TERRORISTS CONVICTED AND SENTENCED TO 23 YEARS IN PRISON EACH FOR A BOTCHED 1984 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST A LIBYAN DIPLOMAT IN MADRID. THE TWO, MOHAMMED RAHAL AND MUSTAFA ALI JALIL, HAVE BEEN EXPELLED FROM SPAIN AND ARE EXPECTED TO BE LEAVING FOR LEBANON AS SOON AS TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE COMPLETED. UNDER THE TERMS OF SPANISH IMMIGRATION LAW, RAHAL AND JALIL HAD TO BE PARDONED IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR EXPULSION AS SIMPLE UNDESIRABLES.

¶2. (U) THE RELEASE OF RAHAL AND JALIL WAS THE OBJECTIVE OF A 1984 KIDNAPPING OF THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT (HE WAS RELEASED AFTER BEING HELD FOR 4 HOURS) AND THE JANUARY 1986 KIDNAPPING OF A SPANISH POLICEMAN AND TWO LOCAL HIRE EMBASSY EMPLOYEES, ALSO IN BEIRUT. THE RELEASE OF RAHAL AND JALIL WAS ALSO AMONG THE ORIGINAL SET OF DEMANDS IN THE TWA 847 HIJACKING (REF A).

¶3. (C) IN THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT, KIDNAPPERS (REPORTEDLY RELATIVES OF THE TWO SHI'IA GUNMEN) HELD THE SPANISH POLICEMAN AND EMBASSY EMPLOYEES FOR SEVERAL WEEKS WHILE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THEIR RELEASE WERE BEING CONDUCTED. LEBANESE JUSTICE MINISTER NABIH BERRI ACTED AS INTERMEDIARY IN THE TALKS BETWEEN THE KIDNAPPERS AND GOS INTERIOR MINISTRY SUBSECRETARY RAFAEL VERA. DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH ULTIMATELY RESULTED IN THE RELEASE OF THE THREE SPANISH EMBASSY EMPLOYEES, CONTACTS AT MFA ADMITTED TO US THAT THE GOS HAD AGREED TO CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR RELEASING THE TWO TERRORISTS (REF B). AT THE TIME THE THINKING WAS THAT RAHAL AND JALIL WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO LEBANON TO FINISH OUT THEIR SENTENCES THERE.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) NO ONE HERE IS UNDER ANY ILLUSION THAT THE RELEASE OF RAHAL AND JALIL IS ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE QUID PRO QUO FOR THE RELEASE FIVE MONTHS AGO OF THE SPANISH EMBASSY HOSTAGES. FREEING THE TWO OVER A SUMMER WEEKEND WILL REDUCE PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THE GOS MANUEVER SOMEWHAT, BUT THE MOVE IS INCONSISTENT WITH GONZALEZ' PUBLIC HARDLINE ON TERRORISM AND SETS AN UNWELCOME PRECEDENT.

¶5. (U) BEIRUT MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

ENDERS